

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022*

**The President's News Conference With President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine**  
*December 21, 2022*

*President Biden.* Please, be seated. Thank you.

President Zelenskyy, I'm honored to welcome you back to the White House.

We've spent an awful lot of time on the telephone as well as on video, but it's good to see you in person again. And we've been in close and frequent communication throughout this conflict from the very beginning, but particularly—it's particularly meaningful to talk with one another in person, look each other in the eye, because leadership through this terrible crisis has inspired the Ukrainian people—as you have done, Mr. President—and the American people and the entire world.

This visit to Washington, your first trip outside Ukraine since February, comes as President Putin is escalating his attacks—his brutal attacks—targeting critical infrastructure to make life as hard as possible for not only innocent Ukrainians, but children and young children and everything from orphanages to schools. It's just outrageous what he's doing.

And we've—as we've heard into—and as we head into the new year, it's important for the American people and for the world to hear directly from you, Mr. President, about Ukraine's fight and the need to continue to stand together through 2023.

This visit also falls on the 300-day mark of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. Three hundred days since Putin launched an unprovoked, unjustified, all-out assault on the free people of Ukraine. Three hundred days of Ukrainian people showing Russia and the world their steel backbone, their love of country, and their unbreakable determination—and I emphasize "unbreakable determination"—to choose their own path.

To Ukrainian people, I say to them all: You have demonstrated, you have shown, your strong stand against aggression in the face of the imperial appetites of autocrats who wrongfully believed you might—you might—they might be able to make might right, and they're not able to do it.

Thus far, they have not—they've stood alone. You know, and you've had—but you haven't stood alone. You have had significant, significant help. We've never stand alone—you will never stand alone.

When Ukraine's freedom was threatened, the American people—like generations of Americans before us—did not hesitate. The support from all across this country, Americans of every walk of life—Democrats and Republicans alike—had the resources and the—to rebound in resounding, united way to do—provide unequivocal and unbending support for Ukraine.

Because we understand in our bones that Ukraine's fight is part of something much bigger. The American people know that if we stand by in the face of such blatant attacks on liberty and democracy and the core principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the world would surely face worse consequences.

And as I said when Putin rolled his tanks into Ukraine in February: American people are prepared to have us stand up to bullies, stand up for freedom. That's who we are as Americans. And that's exactly what we've done.

Even before the invasion began and Putin threatened Ukraine by building up his forces, we helped make sure Ukraine would be prepared to defend itself, even before they crossed into

Ukraine. We provided a steady stream of defensive weapons, including air defense systems and artillery, ammunition, and so much more. And we've not done it alone.

From the very beginning, the United States rallied allies and partners from around the world to stand strong with Ukraine and impose unprecedented—and I emphasize "unprecedented"—sanctions and export controls on Russia, making it harder for the Kremlin to wage this brutal war.

More than 50 nations have committed nearly 2,000 tanks and other armored vehicles; more than 800 artillery systems; more than 2 million rounds of artillery ammunition; and more than 50 advanced multiple rocket launching systems; antiship and anti- —and air defense systems all to strengthen Ukraine.

Together, we've provided billions of dollars in direct budgetary support to make sure the Ukrainian Government can keep providing basic, fundamental services to the Ukrainian people like health care, education, and emergency personnel.

This includes another \$2 billion that—in direct budget support from the American people that the World Bank distributed earlier this week. We've provided humanitarian assistance to help the millions of Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their homes because of Putin's inhumane, brutal war. Communities across Europe have opened their hearts and their homes to help Ukrainians in need.

The United States has been proud to welcome more than 221,000 Ukrainians seeking refuge since March of 2022, including as part of Uniting for Ukraine—as part of our Uniting for Ukraine program.

And today USAID is committing more than \$374 million in urgently needed humanitarian assistance for Ukraine. This will help provide food and cash assistance for more than 1.5 million Ukrainian people, as well as access to health care, safe drinking water, and help stay warm in the winter to more than—for more than 2.5 million Ukrainians.

The United States and our allies and partners around the world have delivered a broad range of assistance at historic speed, and it's been critical to bolstering Ukraine's success thus far. Ukraine has won the battle of Kyiv, has won the battle of Kherson, has won the battle of Kharkiv. Ukraine has defied Russia's expectations at every single turn.

And, President Zelenskyy, you have made it clear he is open to pursuing a—well, let me put it this way: He's not open, but you're open to pursuing peace. You're open to pursuing a just peace.

We also know that Putin has no intention—no intention—of stopping this cruel war. And the United States is committed to ensuring that the brave Ukrainian people can continue—continue to defend their country against Russian aggressions as long as it takes.

And I want to thank the Members of Congress and their—for their broad bipartisan support to Ukraine. And I look forward to signing the omnibus bill soon, which includes \$45 billion—\$45 billion—in additional funding for Ukraine.

I will also sign into law the National Defense Authorization Act, which includes authorities for—to make it easier for the Department of Defense to procure critical munitions and defense materials for Ukraine and other key materials to strengthen our national security.

Today I'm announcing the next tranche of our security assistance to Ukraine: \$1.85 billion package of security assistance that includes both direct transfers of equipment to—that Ukraine needs, as well as contracts to supply ammunition Ukraine will need in the months ahead for its artillery, its tanks, and its rocket launchers.

Critically, in addition to these new capabilities like precision aerial munitions, the package will include a Patriot missile battery, which will—and on which we'll train Ukrainian forces to operate as part of the ongoing effort to help bolster Ukraine's air defense. It's going to take some time to complete the necessary training, but the Patriot battery will be another critical asset for Ukraine as it defends itself against Russian aggression.

Altogether, today's new security assistance, with humanitarian funding, amounts to \$2.2 billion in additional support for the Ukrainian people.

We should be clear about what Russia is doing. It is purposefully attacking Ukraine's critical infrastructure, destroying the systems that provide heat and light to Ukrainian people during the coldest, darkest part of the year. Russia is using winter as a weapon: freezing people, starving people, cutting them off from one another. It's the latest example of the outrageous atrocities that Russian forces are committing against innocent Ukrainian civilians, children and their families.

And the United States is working together with our allies and partners to provide critical equipment to help Ukraine make emergency repairs to their power transmission systems and strengthen the stability of Ukraine's grid in the face of Russia's targeted attacks.

We're also working to hold Russia accountable, including efforts in Congress that will make it easier to seek justice for Russia's war crimes in Ukraine.

Let me close with this: Tonight is the fourth night of—night of Hanukkah, a time when Jewish people around the world—President Zelenskyy and many of the families among them—honor the timeless miracle of a small band of warriors fighting for their values and their freedom against a much larger foe and how they endured and how they overcame; how the flame of faith, with only enough oil for 1 day, burned brightly for 8 days.

A story of survival and resilience that reminds us that the coldest days of the year, that light will always prevail over darkness and hope drives away despair; and that the human spirit is unconquerable as long as there are good people willing to do what is right.

This year has brought so much needless suffering and loss to the Ukrainian people. But I want you to know, President Zelenskyy—I want you to know that—all the people of Ukraine to know as well: The American people have been with you every step of the way, and we will stay with you. We will stay with you for as long as it takes.

What you're doing, what you've achieved, it matters not just to Ukraine, but to the entire world. And together, I have no doubt we'll keep the flame of liberty burning bright, and the light will remain and prevail over the darkness.

Thank you for being here, Mr. President. We're going to stand with you.

*President Zelenskyy.* Thank you so much. Thank you.

*[At this point, President Zelenskyy spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]*

Dear Mr. President—please put on the equipment.

Once again, Mr. President, President Biden, audience, journalists, ladies and gentleman: I came here to the United States to forward the thank—the word of thanks to the people of America, people who do so much for Ukraine. I am thankful for all of this.

This visit to the United States became, really, a historic one for our relations with the United States and the American leadership.

In the last 30 [300; White House correction] days of this war, we have started a new phase of our interrelations with the United States. We became real partners and allies with the content, and I felt today during all of my meetings and during our talks.

Once again, I would like to thank Mr. President, President Biden, for his candid support and, what is very important, the understanding of Ukraine and for the support of the international coalition to strengthen international law. I am grateful to President Biden for his personal efforts, his steps that unite the partners in Global South. When all countries of the world take some position and are focusing on cooperation and mutual understanding, this is very useful for all of the countries—for Ukraine, for the United States.

I want to thank the Congress for bipartisan, bicameral support. And I am looking forward to good meetings with the Members of the Congress and their support. This is the visit that I'm here today to meet with the Congress.

The main issue during my—today's talks is to strengthen Ukraine next year: Our movement forward to fight for our freedom and independence. I have good news returning home: President Biden announced a new package of defense support, about 2 billion U.S. dollars. And the strongest element of this package is the Patriots battery systems, something that will strengthen our air defense significantly.

This is a very important step to create a secure airspace for Ukraine. And that's the only way we would be able to deprive the terrorist country and their terror attack to strike our energy sector, our people, and our infrastructure.

We had a very good negotiation and talks about our strategic steps—which we discussed with President Biden—and what we expect next year and for what we are preparing. This is very important for all Ukrainians, and I am hopeful.

And once again, thank you, Mr. President, for \$45 billion, because this is a big assistance, and I hope that the Congress will approve this financial assistance for our country. This is almost \$45 billion. Thank you very much for the support. Every dollar of this investment for the United States is going to be a strengthening of global security.

I know that the American leadership will be strong and will play important role in global scope. And the United States will help us to defend our values and independence. And regardless of changes in the Congress, I believe that there will be bipartisan and bicameral support. And I know that everybody works for this.

And of course, during all of my meetings today, we discussed issues of a standoff against the terror of Russia, their destruction of our energy infrastructure. We need to survive this winter. We need to protect our people. And we need to be very specific in this area. This is a key humanitarian issue for us right now. This is the survival issue.

We are discussing sanctions and legal pressure on the terrorist country of Russia. Russia needs to hold—to be held accountable for everything it does against us, against our people, against Europe, and the whole free world.

And it is very important that we have the peace formula. And for that, we offer very specific steps—what America can do to help us to implement them. We propose global formula for peace summit. I'm thankful for our American counterparts, that they feel us and understand how important it is to continue and stay on course and work on integrity of the country and international rule of law.

We will also need—as soon as our defense capabilities will be strengthened in the next few months. I don't want to discuss it in details right now. I believe you understand why. And I—but I am very grateful to President Biden. Thank you for your attention to all of these issues.

Glory to Ukraine.

*President Biden.* Thank you very much, Mr. President.

We're going to take questions from four different reporters. I'm going to start with Alex [Alexander Nazaryan] of Yahoo! News.

*North Atlantic Treaty Organization/European Union/Ukraine*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. In 2022, you presided over a bipartisan international coalition to support Ukraine. How will you keep that coalition from fraying in 2023?

And, President Zelenskyy, welcome to Washington on this beautiful winter day. What is your message to the American people?

*President Biden.* Well, in answering your questions first, I'm not at all worried about holding the alliance together in NATO and European Union, as well as other nations.

[*The Ukrainian translation of President Biden's remarks was fed over the English line.*]

I assume this is simultaneous?

All right. [*Laughter*]

*Q.* Yes, it is.

*President Biden.* Okay. I've never seen NATO or the EU more united about anything at all. And I see no sign of there being any change.

We all know what's at stake here; our European partners all the more so. They fully understand it. This is about—we've never seen a major invasion of a European country since World War II. And they see no signs of it—that Putin is going to do anything to change that unless we resist and we help the Ukrainians resist.

We all know what's at stake: the very idea of sovereignty, the U.N. Charter. Putin thought he would weaken NATO; instead, he strengthened NATO. I once said to him that if he talked about the—he wanted—wanted to see the, you know, Europe end up being divided. The—and instead, what did he do? He produced a more united Europe, with Sweden and Finland joining.

So I don't see any reason to believe there will be any lessening of support. And as we reach out to our NATO allies—our Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State—we get continued support. And not only there, but also from around the world, from Japan and many other countries as well. So I feel very good about the solidarity of support for Ukraine.

[*President Zelenskyy made remarks in English as follows.*]

*President Zelenskyy.* Thank you for your question. Thank you very much. You asked me, "What is the message to the American people?" You know, I think I will tell you very simple things, which are important for me. And I think so that we have the same values and the same understanding of the life, the sense of the life.

My message: I wish you peace. I think that is the main thing, and you understand it only when the war in your country, when somebody like these terrorists from Russia come to your houses. And I wish you to see your children alive and adult. And I wish you to see your children when they will go to universities and to see their children. I think that is the main thing what I can wish you.

And of course, to be together with us jointly, because we really fight for our common victory against this tyranny. That is real life. And we will win. And I really want win together.

Thank you so much.

Not "want." Sorry. I'm sure. *[Laughter]*

*President Biden.* You call on one of your people? A press person?

*President Zelenskyy.* Yes.

*[President Zelenskyy spoke in Ukrainian; no translation was provided.]*

#### *Ukraine/Russia*

*Q.* Yes, thank you. Dmytro Anopchenko, Ukrainian television. President Zelenskyy and President Biden, I've got a question to both of you. But firstly, as a Ukrainian—and I mean it—I want to thank the United States for supporting my country. And you know, my family is in Ukraine. And I definitely understand they would not be alive today if America will not support my country, both politically and militarily. So thank you for this. It's understood.

*President Biden.* We will.

*Q.* And as of my question: We entered a new phase of this war. And you definitely discussed today which path to choose, how the war could come to an end, and what's next—will it turn into a new counteroffensive or some kind of peace talks.

So, Mr. Biden and Mr. Zelenskyy, could you share your vision? What's the fair way to end this war? And how do you understand these words "fair peace"? Thank you.

*[President Zelenskyy began his remarks in English as follows.]*

*President Zelenskyy.* My view?

*President Biden.* Your guy. *[Laughter]*

*President Zelenskyy.* I think we have common—I see. I see.

*President Biden.* Although, I like him very much already. *[Laughter]*

*[President Zelenskyy spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]*

*President Zelenskyy.* You have started this question——

*[President Zelenskyy spoke briefly in English as follows.]*

I'm sorry. Sometimes, I switch on my native language.

*[President Zelenskyy continued in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]*

You have started by stating that your family is in Kyiv. And without the assistance of the United States—this is absolutely true—the U.S. leadership in this assistance is strong. And, again, I would like to remind you that your family will be in danger without the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which are very important. That concerns your questions, per se.

What would you like to hear? A just peace? I don't know. I don't know what "just peace" is. It's a very philosophical description. If there is a just war—I don't know.

You know, for all of us, peace—just peace is different. For me, as the President, just peace is no compromises as to the sovereignty, freedom, and territorial integrity of my country, the payback for all the damages inflicted by Russian aggression.

I'm sorry, I'm reminding—I'm talking about children a lot today. But as a father, I would like to emphasize: You know how many parents lost their sons or daughters on the front lines? So

what is just peace for them? Money is nothing. And no compensations or reparations are of no consequence. They live by revenge—[inaudible]. I think this is a tremendous tragedy.

And the longer the war lasts, the longer this aggression lasts, there will be more parents who live for the sake of vengeance or revenge. And I know a lot of people like that.

So there can't be any just peace in the war that was imposed on us by these—I don't know how to describe that because we are in the White House, and I can't find the proper language—so these "inhumans," I would say.

*President Biden.* Let me respond. I think we have the—we share the exact same vision, and that a free, independent, prosperous, and secure Ukraine is the vision.

We both want this war to end. We both want it to end. And as I've said, it could end today if Putin had any dignity at all and did the right thing and just said—pulled out. But that's not going to happen. Not going to happen. It's not going to happen now.

So what comes next? What we talked about today was, we're going to continue to help Ukraine succeed on the battlefield. It can succeed in the battlefield with our help and the help of our European allies and others, so that if and when President Zelenskyy is ready to talk with the Russians, he will be able to succeed as well, because he will have won on the battlefield.

And you know, I don't think we should underestimate the impact this war is having on Russia and the losses they're suffering. And you saw just—I think it was 2 days ago—Putin saying that this is much tougher than he thought.

He thought he could break NATO. He thought he could break the West. He thought he could break the alliance. He thought he could be welcomed by the Ukrainian people that were Russian-speaking. He was wrong, wrong, and wrong. He continues to be wrong. The sooner he makes it—it's clear that he cannot possibly win this war, that's when—the time we have to put the—this President in a position to be able to decide how he wants the war to end.

My turn, huh? [Laughter]

*President Zelenskyy.* Please, yes. Yes.

*President Biden.* Phil Mattingly of—Mattingly of CNN.

#### *Ukraine-U.S. Relations/Russia*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. Welcome, Mr. President.

Mr. President, to start with you: Your advisers often talk about how important—how critically important—you view face-to-face interaction. I'm wondering, after spending 2-plus hours face to face with President Zelenskyy, what you learned or what you took from the meeting that perhaps you couldn't glean or learn in the phone calls or videoconferences.

And somewhat tied to that, was there any discussion related to the U.S. assessments that Russia would not take escalatory action now that Patriots are being sent, will be delivered—a Patriot battery will be delivered?

*President Biden.* Let me answer the first question—the first part of your question. You know, I get kidded for saying that there's—all politics is personal. It's all about looking someone in the eye. And I mean it sincerely.

I don't think there's any, any, any substitute for sitting down face to face with a friend or a foe and looking them in the eye. And that's exactly what's happening at this moment. We've done that more than once, and we're going to continue to do it.

And the winter is setting in, and Putin is increasingly going after civilian targets and women and children, orphanages. This guy is—well—but he's going to fail. And he's going to fail. He's already failed, because he now knows that there's no way he's ever going to occupy all of Ukraine. There's no way in which he's going to be accepted by the Ukrainian people.

And so he's failed in the past. And it was very important for him and everyone else to see that President Zelenskyy and I are united, two countries together, to make sure he cannot succeed.

And I think—I may be mistaken, but I know—I judge every leader by the way they—what they say to me, their consistency, and looking me in the eye.

This guy——

*[President Biden pointed to President Zelenskyy.]*

——has in his—to his very soul is who he says he is. It's clear who he is. He's willing to give his life for his country and all the folks who are with—came with him today.

And so I think it's—he—it's important for him to know we are going to do everything in our power—everything in our power—to see that he succeeds.

*[President Zelenskyy spoke in English as follows.]*

*President Zelenskyy.* Thank you so much.

*President Biden.* What was the second part of your question?

#### *U.S. Military Assistance to Ukraine*

*Q.* I just asked if you had discussed how the U.S. calculated the escalatory effect of sending a Patriot missile battery to Ukraine.

*President Biden.* I did not discuss that at all with the President. But I—we do not—it's a defensive system. It's a defensive weapon system. It's not escalatory. It's defensive. And it's easy to not—and we'd love to not have to have them use it. Just stop the attacks.

*Q.* President Zelenskyy, again, welcome. You mentioned earlier that you'd wanted to make this trip for a while now. Why now?

And also, can you tell me what you think the message you are sending to President Putin is, given the fact that 24 hours ago, you were on the ground, in the front lines, with artillery echoing behind you, and now you find yourself in the White House standing next to the President?

*[President Zelenskyy spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]*

*President Zelenskyy.* Thank you very much for your question. As to what is the message for Putin, I am standing here in the United States with President Biden on the same podium because I respect him as a person, as a President, as a human being for his position. And for me, this is a historic moment.

I can send messages to President Biden. For example, if it's not serious—you said, "What's going to happen after Patriots are installed?" After that, we will send another signal to President Biden that we would like to get more Patriots. *[Laughter]*

*President Biden.* We're working on it.

*[President Zelenskyy spoke in English as follows.]*

*President Zelenskyy.* That is our life. We are in war. I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. *[Laughter]* That is my appreciation.



*[President Zelenskyy spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]*

As to President Putin: In 2019, we had a Normandy meeting. In 2019, I became the President of Ukraine. And at that time, we were sending maximum messages to President Putin, telling him that there shouldn't be a full-scale invasion, to stop aggression, to renew our territorial integrity, to find diplomatic solution, or, God forbid, we should not have a full-scale war.

At that time, he said, "It won't happen." He was lying. So what kind of message I can send him after he actually destroyed our life, is destroying our life? He can even go further somewhere where the Soviet Union stayed before this, so he might want to invade those territories too.

I believe that there is something mortal about his inadequate approach to the world. Why we need to send him a message? He needs to be interested in getting attention from the world, because he is not a subject of civilized people. He should be interested in trying to save something of his culture and history of his country. So that's his problem now.

*[President Zelenskyy spoke in Ukrainian; no translation was provided.]*

*White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre.* This will be the last question.

*[The reporter spoke in English as follows.]*

*Q.* Olga Koshelenko, 1+1 TV channel. When the full-scale invasion started, U.S. officials said that Ukraine cannot receive Patriots because, as you said, it might be unnecessary escalation. And now it is happening. Right now, today, it is happening. And now Ukraine desperately needs more capabilities, including long-range missiles, ATACMS.

Maybe I sound naive, but can we make long story short and give Ukraine all capabilities it needs and liberate all territories rather sooner than later? Thank you.

*President Biden.* Well, the—his answer is yes. *[Laughter]*

*[President Biden pointed to President Zelenskyy, who spoke in English as follows.]*

*President Zelenskyy.* I agree. *[Laughter]*

*President Biden.* Let me be straightforward with you here. Look, the fact is that it's important to remember that before Russia invaded, we had dedicated an enormous amount of security assistance to Ukraine. And we've given Ukraine what they needed when they needed to defend themselves. And since the invasion, that has resulted in more than \$20 billion, in terms of security assistance.

Just today I approved another \$1.8 billion in additional assistance to Ukraine for it to succeed on the battlefield. And we're focused on working with allies and partners to generate capability in four key areas: Air defense. As know—as we know today, the Patriot is the best of that. Secondly is to—and we're looking to do more. We provided hundreds of advanced artillery systems and dozens—from dozens of countries. Thirdly, we've worked with partners to get Ukraine tanks and other armored vehicles. And fourthly, we've announced today another 200,000 rounds of additional ammunition.

Now, you say, "Why don't we just give Ukraine everything there is to give?" Well, for two reasons. One, there's an entire alliance that is critical to stay with Ukraine. And the idea that we would give Ukraine material that is fundamentally different than is already going there would have a prospect of breaking up NATO and breaking up the European Union and the rest of the world.

We're going to give Ukraine what it needs to be able to defend itself, to be able to succeed, and succeed in the battlefield.

And the other piece of this is, you may recall, one of the reasons why I have spent—well, I won't tell you the calculation, but I've spent several hundred hours face to face with our European allies and the heads of state of those countries, and making the case as to why it was overwhelmingly in their interest that they continue to support Ukraine.

They understand it fully, but they're not looking to go to war with Russia. They're not looking for a third World War. And I think it can all be avoided by making sure that Ukraine is able to succeed in the battlefield.

So, anyway, there's more to say, but I probably already said too much. Thank you.

Well, thank you all very, very much. I appreciate your time and attention.

And as I said, Mr. President, you don't have to worry: We are staying with Ukraine as long as Ukraine is there.

Thank you all.

*[President Zelenskyy spoke in English as follows.]*

*President Zelenskyy.* Thank you so much, all you guys.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:44 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences, Ukraine, President Zelenskyy.

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*Names:* Austin, Lloyd J., III; Blinken, Antony J.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

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